

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EA-09 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-15 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5096

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

US MISSION EC BRUSSELS 6814

UNCLAS ROME 0510

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT ELAB IT

SUBJ: RESUMPTION OF BARGAINING ACCOMPANIED BY STRIKES

REF: ROME'S 17742

1. BARGAINING FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE THREE MAJOR CONTRACTS LEFT UNRESOLVED FROM LAST YEAR -- IN CONSTRUCTION, THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY AND THE METAL TRADES -- IS RESUMING FOLLOWING THE YEAR-END HOLIDAYS. IN CHARACTERISTIC ITALIAN FASION, THE RESUMPTION OF TALKS IS BEING CELEBRATED WITH STRIKES IN THE THREE INDUSTRIES.

2. SOME 370,000 CHEMICAL WORKERS ARE STRIKING NATION-WIDE FOR FOUR HOURS TODAY. A 24-HOUR STRIKE OF 1.5 MILLION METAL WORKERS IS SLATED FOR THURSDAY, JANUARY 15. A SERIES OF REGIONAL, "ARTICULATED" STRIKES HAS BEEN PROCLAIMED FOR 1.7 MILLION WORKERS IN THE BUILDING TRADES. IT SHOULD BE ADDED THAT THESE ARE MAXIMUM FIGURES FOR THOSE AFFECTED. PRESUMABLY, AS IN THE PAST, ADHERENCE TO THE STRIKE CALLS WILL BE PARTIAL.

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3. PROSPECTS FOR THE EARLY RENEWAL OF THE CONTRACTS ARE

SOMEWHAT CLOUDED BY THE PREOCCUPATION OF NATIONAL LEADERS WITH THE POLITICAL CRISIS. HOWEVER, THE CONSENSUS CONTINUES TO FAVOR REASONABLY AMICABLE, AND ECONOMICALLY TOLERABLE, AGREEMENTS FAIRLY SOON. WHILE THE PROBLEMS AND CONDITIONS IN EACH OF THE THREE SECTORS DIFFER FROM THE OTHERS, THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF ANY ONE OF THE THREE IS APT TO PROVIDE A PATTERN FOR THE OTHER TWO

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4. AS INDICATED EARLIER, LABOR'S DESIGNS ON SUCH MANAGEMENT PREROGATIVES AS INVESTMENT AND SALES POLICIES CONSTITUTE THE MOST DIFFICULT DEMANDS FOR THE EMPLOYERS. THE GENERAL ASSUMPTION IS THAT THESE DEMANDS HAVE BEEN RAISED BY THE UNIONS, NOT IN EXPECTATION OF ACHIEVING THEM THIS YEAR, BUT IN CONDITIONING MANAGEMENT FOR THEIR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION.

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